

"Why don't you go to your class-room?"
 "I played truant, sir, and I want to be whipped."
 "Go to your room this instant; I told you that I shall not whip you. If I punish you to-day, you would play truant to-morrow."

The sequel, as the story is told, was that the boy went slowly and sadly to his room and played truant no more. His burdened conscience missed the customary relief. The picture may be overdrawn, but the morals, as the little girl said of her Sunday school book, "stick out all over it." Just one of them we will mention. If you must punish, be sure the culprit feels that the punishment is not an offset to the wrong done, but only a deterrent from future wrong-doing.

A late number of the *'Varsity* complains of the amount of attention that is "being paid at present in educational journals and in our High and Public Schools, to the criticism and 'correction' of English sentences," waxes sarcastic at the expense of "the purists and the pedants," who engage in this form of criticism, and declares that "a single entire generation of purists would kill any language." We shall not run the risk of having ourselves classed in the ranks of these ruthless murderers by pointing out that a little more attention to the niceties of language might sometimes improve even the rhetoric of the *'Varsity*, and save its readers from the necessity for contracting their brows over such misty expressions as "a single entire generation of purists." But while sympathizing with the *'Varsity's* views, so far as a good deal of the grammatical criticism it denounces is concerned, we wish to point out the absolute necessity of a certain degree of "purism," to the preservation of the language and the growth of good literature. Every first-class writer is, consciously or unconsciously, a "purist." What is it but an exquisite and cultivated taste in the choice and collocation of words which puts a writer by common consent, in the first-class? Shall we say it is the character of his thinking, not of its expression? Nay, but of his thinking and expression, or rather of his thinking as revealed in his mode of expression, or "style." Thought and expression are the complementary elements of good writing. Ideas and language act and react. Clearness of thought is manifested only by precision of expression. One who uses words loosely, in respect to either their meanings or their relations to other words, or both, can no more take the place of a good writer, than a common house painter that of a portrait or landscape artist. We have no means of recognizing good thinking but by its expression. Clear thinking is sure to lead to precise expression. On the other hand, and this is the aspect of the case with which teachers and educational journals have particularly to do, precision of expression is the sure road to clearness of thought. The student who studies carefully the position of his adverbs, the force of his adjectives, the connection of his relations, etc., is in the very act receiving an invaluable training in exactness of thought, as well as of language. Many write loosely because they think loosely. It is impossible as all history shows, to separate between the perfection of literature and that of language. Else why is it that a model literature such as that of ancient Greece, is always embodied in a model language, such as the ancient Greek? The subject is full of interest. We may recur to it in another issue.

In reply to Mr. Morris the Minister of Education explained the other day that it had been agreed that "the examiners entrusted with the conduct of the Departmental Examinations should also take charge of the candidates for matriculation at the Provincial University, and that successful candidates for second class certificates would be accepted as full matriculants." So far as regards the assimilation of the subjects and methods of examination, this is a move in the right direction. That the non-professional second-class examination and the University Junior Matriculation should be made the same, and even be conducted by the same examiners, seems feasible and sensible. It will give room for some economy in money and labor, and both matriculants and prospective teachers will often find it advantageous to have the one examination accepted as the equivalent of the other. But if Mr. Ross's explanation, which we quote from the *Globe* report, is correctly given, it contains one feature against which every friend of higher education should protest. The language used would seem to imply that henceforth the Matriculation Examinations are to be conducted by examiners appointed by the Education Department and not by the University Senate. We hope there is some inaccuracy or misapprehension in the report and shall seek further information. In the meantime we need only say that such an arrangement could not be too strongly deprecated. It would be a weakness and a degradation to the University to be shorn thus of one of its most important functions, the right of determining who shall be admitted to its first standings and minor grades. It would also be an usurpation on the part of a department which has already shown a mischievous fondness for centralization of power and patronage, of an office which in no wise belongs to it. It will be a sorry day for higher education in Ontario when the head of a department in a partizan Government is permitted to bring a portion of the proper work of the Provincial University under the operation of the Departmental machinery. We wait for more light.

Special.

ELEMENTARY CHEMISTRY.

ATMOSPHERIC AIR.

CONSTITUENTS.

Oxygen and Nitrogen.—The proportion of these gases respectively present in the air may be estimated in various ways:—

By withdrawing the Oxygen from a given volume of Air by Phosphorus.

This can be done, as already shown in the preparation of Nitrogen, either by the active combustion of phosphorus (Art. 88) or more accurately by the slow combustion of the same element (Art. 89). In the latter case the phosphorus may be fixed on the end of a copper wire. In each case when the water is adjusted to the same level within and without the bottle, by depressing it to the requisite extent, it will be seen that about one-fifth of the air in the bottle has disappeared.